

English Lyrical Types

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TORONTO

English Lyrical Types

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES

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PREFACE

This anthology has been designed to provide suitable supplementary reading for candidates preparing for examinations, in the English Literature papers of which they may be required to show that their reading has not been confined to the prescribed books. In and after 1935, for example, candidates for the School Certificate of the Northern Universities may be given an opportunity of showing that they have done such reading. It is, then, obviously desirable that scholars should become acquainted with a varied selection of the best English lyrics, including the work of living poets. The grouping of these lyrics according to types is intended to suggest a plan of study which is systematic without being too narrow, and which can easily be linked with the study of prescribed books. The student for whom Wordsworth is prescribed will surely profit by reading a variety of odes, sonnets, and idylls. He will be better able to appreciate Wordsworth, he will enjoy the exercise of judg-

ment in making comparisons, and, while pursuing a definite line of study, he will extend his acquaintance with poets of diverse temperament and appeal.

It may, perhaps, be necessary to warn the student against regarding classification as an end in itself; but it may be claimed that a study of types of poetry is the most relevant of all the aids to appreciation. The intangible beauty of poetic experience is embodied in verse-forms that present certain clear differences and definable characteristics. A study of these will provide many a clue to the direction and scope of a poet's intention, and will serve to illuminate the subtle relation between the poetic experience and its expression in verse.

No attempt has been made in the following pages to provide a complete classification of English poetry or to suggest that such a classification would be possible. The grouping of these poems is intended simply to illustrate the most striking resemblances and differences that constitute salient types. There must be many poems that bear little resemblance to these types, which only exemplify the modes of feeling and expression that are most commonly recurrent. Moreover, many of these types must overlap, since some (e.g. sonnets), are distinguished solely by their form, others (e.g. elegies) by subject and manner, and yet others (e.g.

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satires) by manner and intention. • It is always necessary to judge for oneself what are the most important qualities of a particular poem, and how nearly it approximates to an established type. But the study of traditional types and their special limitations should at least enable the student to avoid irrelevant criticism, and to achieve a more discriminating appreciation of many a poet who is, as Quintilian said of Theocritus, *admirabilis in suo genere*.

B. J. P.

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English Lyrical Types

THE ODE

The ode is the most formal type of lyric poetry. It is usually serious and dignified, and is frequently designed to celebrate a particular event. A typical ode resembles a public oration; it admits no capricious fancies, but achieves its effect by the clear exposition of a definite theme. It owes its character to its original use among the Greeks.

The Dorian Ode (so called from the tribe of that name), was a choral song performed on public occasions to the accompaniment of a dance. The movements of the chorus are reflected in the structure of the ode, which was composed of a strophe (or turn) followed by an antistrophe (or counter-turn) and concluded by an epode (or finale). The strophe and antistrophe are exactly similar in form, since the movement of the chorus across the scene in the strophe was simply reversed in the antistrophe. A change of stanza-form in the epode marks the conclusion of the dance. This type of ode is sometimes called Pindaric, after the Greek poet Pindar (c. 522 B.C.).

The English imitators of Pindar did not always understand the structure of his odes, and in the seventeenth century, many irregular poems were misnamed Pindaric Odes. The most notable examples of the correct Pindaric form are the odes of Ben Jonson and Gray. Since the end of the eighteenth century, the Pindaric ode has given way to less rigid forms,

and to the modern reader it appears as quaint and obsolete a piece of ceremony as a quadrille

The Greeks had a simpler form of ode which flourished chiefly in Lesbos, and is sometimes called the Lesbian ode. It consisted of an indefinite number of regular stanzas, which were, as a rule, short. Though usually dignified, it was somewhat lighter and more personal in tone than the Pindaric ode. The chief writers of the Lesbian ode were Alcaeus and Sappho, who were imitated in Latin by Horace and Catullus. English odes of this type are commonly called Horatian odes.

The best example of a definite imitation of the Horatian ode in English is Marvell's *Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland*. It is composed of a series of regular stanzas, characteristically brief and firm, the manner is direct and dignified, and the thought clearly developed

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the influence of classical models is less apparent, and there is no point in giving classical labels to the odes of the Romantics and their successors. It is more useful to distinguish regular odes (those which consist of a series of similar stanzas) and irregular odes (those in which each stanza or paragraph may follow a different pattern)

Each of these forms has been made the vehicle of some of the finest of English lyrical poetry. Keats and Shelley have produced subtle and elaborate harmonies in regular stanzas, while Wordsworth and Tennyson have used the irregular form without losing that effect of unity and order which is the chief characteristic of the ode.

Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity

This is the month, and this the happy morn
Wherein the Son of Heaven's Eternal King
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing
That He our deadly forfeit should release,
And with His Father work us a perpetual peace.

That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty
Wherewith He wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and, here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay

Say, heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain
To welcome Him to this His new abode,
Now while the heaven, by the sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

See how from far, upon the eastern road,
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode
And lay it lowly at His blessed feet,
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel quire
From out His secret altar touch'd with hallow'd fire

The Hymn

It was the winter wild
While the heaven-born Child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies,
Nature in awe to Him
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities

But He, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace,
She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,
And waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land

No war, or battle's sound
Was heard the world around
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hookéd chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood,
The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kist,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean—
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence,
But in their glimmering orbs did glow
Until their Lord Himself bespake, and bid them go.

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlighten'd world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn
Or ere the point of dawn
Sate simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music^f sweet
 Their hearts and ears did greet
 As never was by mortal finger strook—
 Divinely-warbled voice
 Answering the stringéd noise,
 As all their souls in blissful rapture took
 The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature, that heard such sound
 Beneath the hollow round
 Of Cynthia's seat the airy region thrilling,
 Now was almost won
 To think her part was done,
 And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
 She knew such harmony alone
 Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
 A globe of circular light,
 That with long beams the shamefaced night array'd;
 The helméd Cherubim
 And sworded Seraphim
 Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
 Harping in loud and solemn quire
 With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
 Before was never made
 But when of old the sons of morning sung,
 While the Creator great
 His constellations set
 And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
 And cast the dark foundations deep,
 And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For if such holy song,
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold,
And speckled vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow, and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

But wisest Fate says No;
This must not yet be so,
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss;
So both Himself and us to glorify
Yet first, to those ychain'd in sleep
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

With such a horrid clang
As on mount Sinai rang
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:
The aged Earth aghast
With terror of that blast
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread His throne.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway;
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving:
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving
No nightly trance or breathed spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er
And the resounding shore
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
From haunted spring and dale
Edged with poplar pale
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

In consecrated earth
And on the holy hearth
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint,
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar Power forgoes his wonted seat

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine,
And moonéd Ashtaroth
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine,
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thamnuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue,
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove, or green,
Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest,
Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud;
In vain with timbrell'd anthems dark
The sable-stoléd sorcerers bear his worship ark.

He feels from Judæ's land
 The dreaded Infant's hand;
 The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
 Nor all the gods beside
 Longer dare abide,
 No Typhon huge ending in snaky twine
 Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
 Can in His swaddling bands control the damnéd crew.

So, when the sun in bed
 Curtain'd with cloudy red
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
 The flocking shadows pale
 Troop to the infernal jail,
 Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave,
 And the yellow-skirted fays
 Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

But see, the Virgin blest
 Hath laid her Babe to rest,
 Time is, our tedious song should here have ending..
 Heaven's youngest-teernéd star
 Hath fix'd her polish'd car,
 Her sleeping Lord with hand-maid lamp attending
 And all about the courtly stable
 Bright-harness'd angels sit in order serviceable
John Milton

Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland

The forward youth that would appear,
 Must now forsake his Muses dear,
 Nor in the shadows sing
 His numbers languishing

THE ODE

II

'Tis time to leave the books in dust,
And oil th' unused armour's rust,
 Removing from the wall
 The corslet of the hall

So restless Cromwell could not cease
In the inglorious arts of peace,
 But through adventurous war
 Urgéd his active star.

And like the three-fork'd lightning, first
Breaking the clouds where it was nurst,
 Did thorough his own side
 His fiery way divide:

(For 'tis all one to courage high
The emulous, or enemy;
 And with such, to enclose
 Is more than to oppose ,)

Then burning through the air he went
And palaces and temples rent;
 And Caesar's head at last
 Did through his laurels blast.

'Tis madness to resist or blame
The face of angry heaven's flame,
 And if we would speak true,
 Much to the man is due

Who, from his private gardens, where
He lived reservéd and austere
 (As if his highest plot
 To plant the bergamot),

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

Could by industrious valour climb
To ruin the great work of Time,
And cast the Kingdoms old
Into another mould;

Though Justice against Fate complain,
And plead the ancient Rights in vain—
But those do hold or break
As men are strong or weak

Nature, that hateth emptiness,
Allows of penetration less,
And therefore must make room
Where greater spirits come

What field of all the Civil War
Where his were not the deepest scar?
And Hampton shows what part
He had of wiser art,

Where, twining subtle fears with hope,
He wove a net of such a scope
That Charles himself might chase
To Carisbrook's narrow case,

That thence the Royal actor borne
The tragic scaffold might adorn
While round the armed bands
Did clap their bloody hands,

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try,

Nor call'd the Gods, with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bow'd his comely head
Down, as upon a bed

—This was that memorable hour
Which first assured the forcéd power
So when they did design
The Capitol's first line,

A Bleeding Head, where they begun,
Did fright the architects to run;
And yet in that the State
Foresaw its happy fate!

And now the Irish are ashamed
To see themselves in one year tamed
So much one man can do
That does both act and know

They can affirm his praises best,
And have, though overcome, confest
How good he is, how just
And fit for highest trust,

Nor yet grown stiffer with command,
But still in the Republic's hand—
How fit he is to sway
That can so well obey!—

He to the Commons' feet presents
A Kingdom for his first year's rents,
And (what he may) forbears
His fame, to make it theirs:

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

And has his sword and spoils ungirt
To lay them at the Public's skirt.

So when the falcon high
Falls heavy from the sky,

She, having kill'd, no more does search
But on the next green bough to perch,
Where, when he first does lure,
The falconer has her sure

—What may not then our Isle presume
While victory his crest does plume?
What may not others fear
If thus he crowns each year?

As Caesar he, ere long, to Gaul,
To Italy an Hannibal,
And to all states not free
Shall climacteric be.

The Pict no shelter now shall find
Within his parti-colour'd mind,
But from this valour sad,
Shrink underneath the plaid—

Happy, if in the tufted brake
The English hunter him mistake,
Nor lay his hounds in near
The Caledonian deer.

But thou, the War's and Fortune's son,
March indefatigably on;
And for the last effect
Still keep the sword erect:

Besides the force it has to fright
 The spirits of the shady night,
 The same arts that did gain
 A power, must it maintain.

Andrew Marvell

The Bard

A Pindaric Ode

“Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
 Confusion on thy banners wait!
 Tho’ fann’d by Conquest’s crimson wing
 They mock the air with idle state
 Helm, nor hauberk’s twisted mail,
 Nor e’en thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
 From Cambria’s curse, from Cambria’s tears!”
 —Such were the sounds that o’er the crested pride
 Of the first Edward scatter’d wild dismay,
 As down the steep of Snowdon’s shaggy side
 He wound with toilsome march his long array:—
 Stout Glo’ster stood aghast in speechless trance,
 “To arms!” cried Mortimer, and couch’d his quivering lance.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
 Frowns o’er old Conway’s foaming flood,
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the Poet stood,
 (Loose his beard and hoary hair
 Stream’d like a meteor to the troubled air,)
 And with a master’s hand and prophet’s fire
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre
 “Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave
 Sighs to the torrent’s awful voice beneath!

O'er thee, O King! their hundred arms they wave
 Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
 Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

" Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
 That hush'd the stormy main
 Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed
 Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 Modred, whose magic song
 Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.
 On dreary Arvon's shore they lie
 Smear'd with gore and ghastly pale
 Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail,
 The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by
 Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
 Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
 Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
 Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
 No more I weep They do not sleep,
 On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
 I see them sit, they linger yet,
 Avengers of their native land
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line "

" Weave the warp and weave the woof,
 The winding-sheet of Edward's race
 Give ample room and verge enough
 The characters of hell to trace
 Mark the year and mark the night
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 The shrieks of death thro' Berkley's roofs that ring,
 Shrieks of an agonizing king!
 She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs
 That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,

From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heaven! What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

"Mighty victor, mighty lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies
Is the sable warrior fled?
Thy son is gone He rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
—Gone to salute the rising morn
Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast.
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his Consort's faith, his Father's fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head!
Above, below, the rose of snow,

Twined with her blushing foe, we spread
 The bristled boar in infant-gore
 Wallows beneath the thorny shade
 Now, brothers, bending o'er the accurséd loom,
 Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

“ Edward, lo! to sudden fate
 (Weave we the woof, The thread is spun,)
 Half of thy heart we consecrate
 (The web is wove, The work is done)”
 “ Stay, O stay! nor thus forlorn
 Leave me unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn
 In yon bright track that fires the western skies
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes
 But O! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
 Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
 Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail —
 All hail, ye genuine kings! Britannia's issue, hail!

“ Girt with many a baron bold
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear,
 And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
 In bearded majesty, appear
 In the midst a form divine!
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-Line
 Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face
 Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
 What strains of vocal transport round her play?
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring as she sings,
 Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-colour'd wings.

“ The verse adorn again
 Fierce War, and faithful Love,
 And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
 In buskin’d measures move
 Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
 With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast
 A voice as of the cherub-choir
 Gales from blooming Eden bear,
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
 That lost in long futurity expire
 Fond impious man, think’st thou yon sanguine cloud
 Raised by thy breath, has quench’d the orb of day?
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray
 Enough for me with joy I see
 The different doom our fates assign
 Be thine Despair and sceptred Care;
 To triumph and to die are mine ”
 —He spoke, and headlong from the mountain’s height
 Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night
Thomas Gray

To Evening

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
 May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
 • Like thy own solemn springs,
 Thy springs, and dying gales;

O nymph reserved,—while now the bright-haired Sun
 Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
 With brede ethereal wove,
 O’erhang his wavy bed,

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short, shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum,—
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow I hail
Thy genial, loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams

Or if chill blustering winds or driving rain
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim discover'd spires;
 And hears their simple bell; and marks o'er all
 Thy dewy fingers draw
 The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
 And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
 While Summer loves to sport
 Beneath thy lingering light,

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
 Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
 Affrights thy shrinking train,
 And rudely rends thy robes,

So long, regardless of thy quiet rule,
 Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
 Thy gentlest influence own,
 And hymn thy favourite name!

William Collins.

To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run:
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core,
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells •
 With a sweet kernel, to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells. •

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook,
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
 While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river sallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies,
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn,
 Hedge-crickets sing, and now with treble soft
 The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
 And gathering swallows twitter in the' skies

John Keats.

To a Skylark

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden light'ning
Of the sunken sun
O'er which clouds are bright'ning
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight—

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
• Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is over-flow'd.

What thou art we know not,
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence show'rs a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awaken'd flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
'That panteth forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal

Or triumphal chaunt,

Match'd with thine, would be all

But an empty vaunt—

A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want

What objects are the fountains

Of thy happy strain?

What fields, or waves, or mountains?

What shapes of sky or plain?

What love of thine own kind? What ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance

Languor cannot be:

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee.

Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety

Waking or asleep

Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught,

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn

Hate, and pride, and fear,

If we were things born

Not to shed a tear,

I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now!
Percy Bysshe Shelley.

March: An Ode

Ere frost-flower and snow-blossom faded and fell, and the
splendour of winter had passed out of sight,
The ways of the woodlands were fairer and stranger than
dreams that fulfil us in sleep with delight;
The breath of the mouths of the winds had hardened on
tree-tops and branches that glittered and swayed
Such wonders and glories of blossom-like snow or of frost
that outlightens all flowers till it fade
That the sea was not lovelier than here was the land, nor
the night than the day, nor the day than the night,
Nor the winter sublimer with storm than the spring. such
mirth had the madness and might in thee made,
March, master of winds, bright minstrel and marshal of
storms that enkindle the season they smite.

And now that the rage of thy rapture is satiate with revel
and ravin and spoil of the snow,

And thy branches it brightened are broken, and shattered
the tree-tops that only thy wrath could lay low,
How should not thy lovers rejoice in thee, leader and lord
of the year that exults to be born
So strong in thy strength and so glad of thy gladness whose
laughter puts winter and sorrow to scorn?
Thou hast shaken the snows from thy wings, and the frost
on thy forehead is molten: thy lips are aglow
As a lover's that kindle with kissing, and earth, with her
raiment and tresses yet wasted and torn,
Takes breath as she smiles in the grasp of thy passion to
feel through her spirit the sense of thee flow.

Fain, fain would we see but again for an hour what the
wind and the sun have dispelled and consumed,
Those full deep swan-soft feathers of snow with whose
luminous burden the branches implumed
Hung heavily, curved as a half-bent bow, and fledged not
as birds are, but petalled as flowers,
Each tree-top and branchlet a pinnacle jewelled and carved,
or a fountain that shines as it showers,
But fixed as a fountain is fixed not, and wrought not to
last till by time or by tempest entombed,
As a pinnacle carven and gilded of men for the date of its
doom is no more than an hour's,
One hour of the sun's when the warm wind wakes him to
wither the snow-flowers that froze as they bloomed.

As the sunshine quenches the snowshine, as April subdues
thee, and yields up his kingdom to May, .
So time overcomes the regret that is born of delight as it
passes in passion away,
And leaves but a dream for desire to rejoice in or mourn
for with tears or thanksgivings, but thou, .

Bright god that art gone 'from us, maddest and gladdest of months, to what goal hast thou gone from us now?
For somewhere surely the storm of thy laughter that lightens, the beat of thy wings that play,
Must flame as a fire through the world, and the heavens that we know not rejoice in thee: surely thy brow
Hath lost not its radiance of empire, thy spirit the joy that impelled it on quest as for prey.

Are thy feet on the ways of the limitless waters, thy wings on the winds of the waste north sea?
Are the fires of the false north dawn over heavens where summer is stormful and strong like thee
Now bright in the sight of thine eyes? are the bastions of icebergs assailed by the blast of thy breath?
Is it March with the wild north world when April is waning? the word that the changed year saith,
Is it echoed to northward with rapture of passion reiterate from spirits triumphant as we
Whose hearts were uplift at the blast of thy clarions as men's rearisen from a sleep that was death
And kindled to life that was one with the world's and with thine? hast thou set not the whole world free?

For the breath of thy lips is freedom, and freedom's the sense of thy spirit, the sound of thy song,
Glad god of the north-east wind, whose heart is as high as the hands of thy kingdom are strong,
Thy kingdom whose empire is terror and joy, twin-featured and fruitful of births divine,
Days lit with the flame of the lamps of the flowers, and nights that are drunken with dew for wine,
And sleep not for joy of the stars that deepen and quicken, a denser and fierier throng,

And the world that thy breath¹ bade whiten and tremble
rejoices at heart as they strengthen and shine,
And earth gives thanks for the glory bequeathed her, and
knows of thy reign that it wrought not wrong
Thy spirit is quenched not, albeit we behold not thy face
in the crown of the steep sky's arch,
And the bold first buds of the whin wax golden, and witness
arise of the thorn and the larch:
Wild April, enkindled to laughter and storm by the kiss of
the wildest of winds that blow,
Calls loud on his brother for witness; his hands that were
laden with blossom are sprinkled with snow,
And his lips breathe winter, and laugh, and relent; and the
live woods feel not the frost's flame parch,
For the flame of the spring that consumes not but quickens
is felt at the heart of the forest aglow,
And the sparks that enkindled and fed it were strewn from
the hands of the gods of the winds of March

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Alexander's Feast, or, The Power of Music

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne,
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crown'd),
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride:—

Happy, happy, 'happy pair!
 None but the brave
 None but the brave
 None but the brave deserves the fair!

Timotheus placed on high
 Amid the tuneful quire
 With flying fingers touch'd the lyre.
 The trembling notes ascend the sky
 And heavenly joys inspire.
 The song began from Jove
 Who left his blissful seats above—
 Such is the power of mighty love!
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god,
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode
 When he to fair Olympia prest,
 And while he sought her snowy breast,
 Then round her slender waist he curl'd,
 And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
 —The listening crowd admire the lofty sound;
 A present deity! they shout around
 A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound:
 With ravish'd ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod
 And seems to shake the spheres

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
 Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
 The jolly god in triumph comes!
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!
 Flush'd with a purple grace
 He shows his honest face:
 Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes!

Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes,
And while he Heaven and Earth defied
Changed his hand and check'd his pride.
 He chose a mournful Muse
 Soft pity to infuse
He sung Darius great and good,
 By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
 Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood,
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes
 —With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
 The various turns of Chance below,
And now and then a sigh he stole,
 And tears began to flow

The mighty master smil'd to see
That love was in the next degree,
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
 War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
 Honour but an empty bubble;
 Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying;
 If the world be worth thy winning,
 Think, O think, it worth enjoying:
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
 Take the good the gods provide thee!
 —The many rend the skies with loud applause;
 So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.
 The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gazed on the fair
 Who caused his care,
 And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again
 At length with love and wine at once oppress'd
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast

Now strike the golden lyre again.
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
 Break his bands of sleep asunder
 And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder
 Hark, hark! the horrid sound
 Has raised up his head:
 As awaked from the dead
 And amazed he stares around
 Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
 See the Furies arise!
 • See the snakes that they rear
 How they hiss in their hair,
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
 Behold a ghastly band,
 Each a torch in his hand!

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain

And unburied remain

Inglorious on the plain:

Give the vengeance due

To the valiant crew!

Behold how they toss their torches on high,

How they point to the Persian abodes

And glittering temples of their hostile gods.

—The princes applaud with a furious joy

And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;

Thais led the way

To light him to his prey,

And like another Helen, fired another Troy!

—Thus, long ago,

Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,

While organs yet were mute,

Timotheus, to his breathing flute

And sounding lyre,

Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.

At last divine Cecilia came,

Inventress of the vocal frame,

The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store

Enlarged the former narrow bounds,

And added length to solemn sounds,

With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.

—Let old Timotheus yield the prize

Or both divide the crown,

He raised a mortal to the skies,

She drew an angel down!

John Dryden.

Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore,—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose,
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief.
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,—
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong.
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May,
Doth every beast keep holiday,—
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

Ye blesséd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee,
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all
O evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling
On every side
• In a thousand valleys far and wide
Fresh flowers, while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat.
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

•
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy,
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended,
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own,
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art,
A wedding or a funeral,
A mourning or a funeral,

And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song;
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife,
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That life brings with her in her equipage,
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by,
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction. not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest,
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:

—Not for these I raise

The song of thanks and praise,
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing,
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence truths that wake,

To perish never;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence in a season of calm weather

Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then, sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!

We, in thought, will join your throng
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;

In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering,

In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;

I only have relinquish'd one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway;

I love the brooks which down their channels fret,

Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born day

Is lovely yet;

The clouds that gather round the setting sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye

That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;

Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

William Wordsworth.

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes,
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free,
O give him welcome, this is he,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee,
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun,
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew

The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes
Such a war had such a close
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings,
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down,
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew,
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,

If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Philomela

Hark! ah, the Nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!

O Wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?
Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?

Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb Sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor Fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal Passion!
Eternal Pain!

Matthew Arnold,

Recommended for further reading:

Gray *The Progress of Poesy On a Distant Prospect
of Eton College On the Death of a Favourite Cat.*
Wordsworth: *Ode to Duty*
Coleridge: *France: an Ode*
Keats. *To the Nightingale*
Shelley *To the West Wind*
Bryant *To a Water-Fowl*

THE ELEGY

An elegy is a lament, a poetic expression of sorrow. The most characteristic English elegies, *Lycidas*, *Thyrsis*, *Adonais*, commemorate the death of a particular person. Some elegies, however, express a more diffused sorrow, and perhaps the most famous of all, the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, is rather a meditation than a lament.

The elegy has no set form. Gray uses the heroic quatrain; Shelley and Arnold use elaborate regular stanzas; Milton's *Lycidas* is written in irregular rhymed paragraphs. Some sonnets might well be described as elegies.

The manner of the elegy is often elaborately artificial. The pastoral convention (by which the poet speaks in the guise of a shepherd) is adopted by Milton, Shelley, and Arnold. This device enables the poet to embroider a simple theme, but is perhaps not the best means of expressing a deep personal grief. *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, though occasioned by the death of a particular person, are inspired rather by the contemplation of mortality. More recent elegies, such as Walt Whitman's *O Captain, my Captain*, though often figurative, are simpler and more direct in manner. But whether simple or elaborate, the best elegies are distinguished by nobility of feeling and dignity of expression.

Lycidas

In this Monody the author bewails the loss of his friend, Edward King, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never-sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forc'd fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme
He must not float upon his wat'ry bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destin'd urn;
And, as he passes, turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.
For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,

Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark
 Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
 Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe
 "Ahl who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
 Last came, and last did go
 The pilot of the Gahlean lake;
 Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
 (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain);
 He shook his mured locks, and stern bespake
 "How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
 Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
 Creep and intrude and climb into the fold!
 Of other care they little reck'ning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
 That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!
 What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
 And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw,
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But swoln with wind, and the rank must they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said:
 —But that two-handed engine at the door
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
 That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,

And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
 Their bells and flow'rets of a thousand hues.
 Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
 Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
 On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
 Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes
 That on the green turf suck the honied show'rs
 And purple all the ground with vernal flow'rs
 Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
 The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
 The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
 The glowing violet,
 The musk-rose, and the well-attir'd wood-bine,
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears.
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
 And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
 To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
 For so to interpose a little ease,
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise;
 Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
 Wash far away,—where'er thy bones are hurl'd,
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
 Where thou perhaps, under the whelming tide,
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world,
 Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
 Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
 Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
 Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold,
 —Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
 And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more:
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
 Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor;
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed,

And yet anon repairs his drooping head
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high
 Through the dear might of Him that walk'd the waves;
 Where, other groves and other streams along,
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
 There entertain him all the saints above,
 In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
 That sing, and singing, in their glory move,
 And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more,
 Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
 To all that wander in that perilous flood

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,
 While the still morn went out with sandals grey,
 He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay
 And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
 And now was dropt into the western bay '—
 At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new

John Milton

Elegy written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me

THE ELEGY

51

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure,
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the Poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre:

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes—

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
Forbad to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the Gates of Mercy on Mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray,
Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
“Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn;

“There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

“Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies would he rove;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

“One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

“The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the Church-way Path we saw him borne,—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon agéd thorn.”

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,—
A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God*

Thomas Gray.

Requiescat

*Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew.
In quiet she reposes;
Ah! would that I did too.*

*Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.*

*Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound;
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round*

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
 It flutter'd and fail'd for breath;
 To-night it doth inherit
 The vasty hall of death.

Matthew Arnold.

O Captain! My Captain

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
 The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring,
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red!
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
 Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores
 a-crowding,
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 This arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck
 You've fallen cold and dead

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and
 done,
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 • Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
 But I, with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

Walt Whitman.

Echo's Lament for Narcissus

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;

Yet, slower yet; O faintly, gentle springs;

List to the heavy part the music bears;

Woe weeps out her division when she sings.

Droop herbs and flowers,

Fall grief in showers,

Our beauties are not ours;

O, I could still,

Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,

Drop, drop, drop, drop,

Since nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

Ben Jonson.

For the Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,

England mourns for her dead across the sea

Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,

Fallen in the cause of the free

Solemn the drums thrill Death august and royal

Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.

There is music in the midst of desolation

And a glory that shines upon our tears

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,

Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.

They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,

They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night,

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain

Laurence Binyon

Anthem for Doomed Youth

"What passing-bells for these who died as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons
No mockeries for them; no prayers or bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

THE ELEGY

99

"What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds."

Wilfred Owen.

Recommended for further reading:

Shelley. *Adonais*
Arnold: *Thyrsis*
Tennyson *In Memoriam*
Baring: *In Memoriam A H*
Bridges *I shall never love the snow again.*

THE SONNET

A sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines (usually iambic pentameters) with a rhyme scheme approximating to one of two traditional patterns. It is a form suited to the expression of a single idea or sentiment, since it gives an impression of unity and completeness.

The sonnet was first written in Italian, and is associated chiefly with the name of Petrarch. Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced it into English in the sixteenth century. The Italian form consisted of two distinct parts, the octave, rhyming *abbaabba*, and the sestet rhyming in a variety of ways (for example, *cdecde*, or *cdcdcd*), but never ending in a couplet. Thus there was a clear break after the eighth line (sometimes called a *volta* or turn), and the separate parts were tightly bound up by their rhymes. The effect of this form has been aptly compared to the flow and ebb of a wave. Many of the best English sonnets, notably those of Milton and Wordsworth, are of the Italian pattern.

Another type of sonnet, usually known as the Shakespearean type, was really an English adaptation of the Petrarchan model. It has an easier rhyme scheme (*abab, cdcd, efef, gg*), which abolishes the strongly marked pause at the eighth line and throws all the emphasis on to the final couplet. A very slight variation of this pattern was introduced by Edmund Spenser, who, by rhyming the quatrains *abab, bcbc, cdcd*, bound them more closely together and emphasised yet more strongly the isolation of the couplet. The best sonnets of this type are notable for the force of the climax, but there is a corresponding danger of anti-climax which even Shakespeare did not always avoid.

There are some good sonnets in English which do not conform strictly to either of the traditional patterns. Some of Milton's sonnets (e.g. "On the late Massacre in Piedmont"), while following the Petrarchan rhyme-scheme, tend to obliterate the break after the eighth line. Wordsworth takes still greater liberties with the Petrarchan pattern, for he not only ignores the *volta*, but occasionally alters the character of the sestet by concluding it with a couplet. Modern poets have tried other experiments, such as inverting the order of the octave and the sestet; but it seems unlikely that any new pattern of sonnet will become an established type. The sonnet is too short to require much metrical variety; consequently, most English sonnets are written in regular iambic pentameters and approximate very closely to one of the two traditional patterns

The sonnet has no set range of subjects, and no prescribed manner. Milton and Wordsworth have written sonnets on public occasions which have a distinct resemblance to odes. On the other hand, Shakespeare's sonnets express intimately personal emotions, and some of Milton's sonnets to his friends might well be described as chatty. But it is perhaps worth observing that the most memorable sonnets are those which express a powerful feeling. It would seem that the sonnet, with its strictly regulated movement and the repeated chiming of its rhymes, is specially capable of conveying emotional stress. Thus, though it has often been associated with graceful trifling, it is important chiefly for its capacity to produce intense emotion with a narrow focus

Sonnet XLI from "Astrophel and Stella"

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
 Guided so well, that I obtained the prize,
 Both by the judgment of the English eyes,
 And of some sent by that sweet enemy, France;
 Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
 Townsfolks my strength, a daintier judge applies
 His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
 Some lucky wits impute it but to chance,
 Others, because of both sides I do take
 My blood from them who did excel in this,
 Think Nature me a man of arms did make
 How far they shot awry! the true cause is
 Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
 Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race
 Sir Philip Sidney.

One Day I wrote her Name

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
 But came the waves and washed it away
 Again I wrote it with a second hand,
 But came the tide and made my pains his prey.
 "Vain man!" said she, "that dost in vain assay
 A mortal thing so to immortalize,
 For I myself shall like to this decay,
 And eke my name be wiped out likewise"
 "Not so," quoth I, "let baser things devise
 To die in dust, but you shall live by fame
 My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
 And in the heavens write your glorious name,—
 Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
 Our love shall live, and later life renew"
 Edmund Spenser.

True Love

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove —

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken,
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom —

If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved

William Shakespeare

Love's Farewell

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,—
Nay I have done, you get no more of me,
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free,

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,

—Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

Michael Drayton.

Saint John Baptist

The last and greatest Herald of Heaven's King
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he more harmless found than man, and mild.

His food was locusts, and what there doth spring,
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd,
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled

There burst he forth "All ye whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn,
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!"
—Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry?

Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their flinty caves, Repent! Repent!

William Drummond.

On the late Massacre in Piedmont

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who, having learnt Thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe

John Milton.

On his Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide.—
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
I fondly ask —But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work, or His own gifts who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best His state

Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and wait.

John Milton.

Scorn not the Sonnet

Scorn not the sonnet, Critic, you have frowned,
 Mindless of its just honours; with this key
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
 With it Camoens soothed an exile's grief,
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow a glow-worm lamp,
 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
 To struggle through dark ways, and when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

William Wordsworth.

The World is too much with us

The world is too much with us, late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers
 Little we see in Nature that is ours,
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
 The winds that will be howling at all hours
 And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers,
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune,

It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.
William Wordsworth.

On first looking into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien
John Keats.

Ozymandias of Egypt

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert—Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
 And on the pedestal these words appear.
 " My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.
Percy Bysshe Shelley.

On the Castle of Chillon

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
 Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art—
 For there thy habitation is the heart—
 The heart which love of Thee alone can bind,
 And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd,
 To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
 Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
 And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
 Chillon! thy prison is a holy place
 And thy sad floor an altar, for 'twas trod,
 Until his very steps have left a trace
 Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
 By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
 For they appeal from tyranny to God
Lord Byron.

Shakespeare

Others abide our question—Thou art free!
 We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
 Out-topping knowledge! So some sovran hill
 Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the border, often, of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;
And thou, whose head did stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguess'd at — Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

Matthew Arnold.

The Odyssey

As one that for a weary space has lain
Lull'd by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Æcan isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine—
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,—
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours
They hear like Ocean on the western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey

Andrew Lang.

The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds, dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends, and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven

Rupert Brooke

Recommended for further reading:

There are notable series of sonnets by Sir P. Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, D. G. Rossetti, E. B. Browning. See Rossetti's translations of Italian sonnets.

THE SONG

The poem actually intended to be sung was the original type of the lyric. Thus the song embodies the most essential qualities of lyrical poetry. To-day, many poems which are called lyrics are hardly suitable for singing, but the song is the type to which they approximate.

The first essential of a song is that it should be emotional. It achieves its effect by conveying feelings rather than ideas. This is true of all poetry, but some types of poetry may be concerned with the emotional aspect of complex ideas. In a song the thought is necessarily simple, and success depends on the delicacy or intensity of the feeling.

The form and language of a song are usually simple and direct, and the words are chosen with special regard to their phonetic value.

Many songs (notably some by Robert Burns) have been written to fit already existing tunes. To do this in a natural and easy manner is sufficiently difficult, and poets have usually chosen tunes with a simple, strongly marked rhythm, and have avoided unnecessary complexity in their phrasing. Even when the words are written first, the true song-writer, bearing in mind the requirements of the musician, will choose a simple form of stanza which can be easily repeated, and a simple type of rhythm which can be to some extent remoulded by its association with the music.

The qualities of a good song are difficult to define. The reader will find it illuminating to compare Shakespeare's songs with his sonnets. In the sonnets there is obviously

more complex thought, more tangled sentences, and a noticeable crowding of consonants; whereas in the songs there is a predominance of vowel sounds, very simple phrasing, and a very slender framework of thought. A song like *Under the Greenwood Tree* gives us not so much a thought as the flavour of a thought, and pleases us mainly by the thrill of its gaiety and the throb of the rhythm

Somer is Ycomen in

Somer is ycomen in,
 Loud sing, cuckoo,
Groweth seed and blometh mead
 And springeth the wood new.
 Sing, cuckool
Ewe bleateth after lamb,
 Loweth after calf coo;
Bullock sterteth,
Buck verteth,
 Merrily sing, cuckoo,
 Cuckoo, cuckoo!
 Well singés thou, cuckoo,
 Nor cease thou never noo.

Anonymous.

There is a Lady sweet and kind

There is a Lady sweet and kind,
Was never face so pleased my mind.
I did but see her passing by,
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion, and her smiles,
Her wit, her voice my heart beguiles,
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,
And yet I love her till I die.

Cupid is wingéd and doth range,
Her country so my love doth change:
But change she earth, or change she sky,
Yet will I love her till I die

Anonymous.

Under the Greenwood Tree

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to lie i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather

William Shakespeare.

Ariel's Song

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie,
There I couch, when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough!
William Shakespeare.

“Hark! Hark! the Lark!”

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies,
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes
With every pretty thing that is,
My lady sweet, arise
Arise, arise
William Shakespeare.

To Lucasta, on going to the Wars

•
Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,—
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, shall adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more

Richard Lovelace.

To Celia

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine,
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine,
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not wither'd be,
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sent'st it back to me,
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself but thee!

Ben Jonson

To Anthea who may command
him any thing

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be:
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay,
To honour thy decree:
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see
And, having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee

Bid me despair, and I'll despair
Under that cypress tree
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en Death, to die for thee

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me,
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee

Robert Herrick.

Echo

(Song from *Comus*)

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet imbroider'd vale
Where the love-lorn Nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad Song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle Pair
That liketh thy Narcissus are?
O if thou have
Hid them in some flowery Cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear!
So maist thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'n's Harmonies!

John Milton.

Lament for Flodden

I've heard them liltin' at our ewe-milking,
Lasses a' liltin' before dawn o' day,
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

At bughts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
Lasses are lonely and dowie and wae,
Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin and hies her away

In har'st, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
Bandsters are lyart, and runkled, and grey,
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae younkers are roaming
 'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play;
 But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dool and wae for the order, sent our lads to the Border!
 The English, for ance, by guile wan the day,
 The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
 The prime of our land, are cauld in the clay

We'll hear nae mair liltin' at the ewe-milking,
 Women and bairns are heartless and wae,
 Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

Jane Elliot.

The Land o' the Leal

I'm wearing awa', Jean,
 Like snaw when it's thaw, Jean,
 I'm wearing awa'
 To the land o' the leal
 There's nae sorrow there, Jean,
 There's neither cauld nor care, Jean,
 The day is ay fair
 In the land o' the leal

Ye were ay leal and true, Jean,
 Your task's ended noo, Jean,
 And I'll welcome you
 To the land o' the leal
 Our bonnie bairn's there, Jean,
 She was baith guid and fair, Jean,
 O we grudged her right sair
 To the land o' the leal!

Then dry that tearfu' e'e, Jean,
My soul lang's to be free, Jean,
And angels wait on me

To the land o' the leal!
Now fare ye weel, my ain Jean,
This world's care is vain, Jean;
We'll meet and ay be fain
In the land o' the leal

Carolna, Lady Nairne

“God moves in a Mysterious Way”

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain

William Cowper.

The Piper

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he, laughing, said to me,

“ Pipe a song about a lamb,”
So I piped with merry cheer,
“ Piper, pipe that song again,”
So I piped he wept to hear

“ Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,
Sing thy songs of happy cheer ”
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear

“ Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read ”
So he vanish'd from my sight
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear

William Blake.

Sally in our Alley

Of all the girls that are so smart
There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley
There is no lady in the land
Is half so sweet as Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley

Her father he makes cabbage-nets
And through the streets does cry them:
Her mother she sells laces long .
To such as please to buy them
But sure such folk could ne'er beget
So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

When she is by, I leave my work,
I love her so sincerely,
My master comes, like any Turk,
And bangs me most severely
But let him bang, long as he will,
I'll bear it all for Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

Of all the days are in the week,
I dearly love but one day,
And that's the day that comes betwixt
A Saturday and Monday

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

For then I'm dress'd, in all my best,
To walk abroad with Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

My master carries me to church,
And often I am blaméd,
Because I leave him in the lurch,
Soon as the text is naméd
I leave the church in sermon time,
And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley

When Christmas comes about again,
O then I shall have money,
I'll hoard it up and, box and all,
I'll give unto my honey
I would it were ten thousand pounds,
I'd give it all to Sally,
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

My master and the neighbours all,
Make game of me and Sally,
And but for she I'd better be
A slave, and row a galley,
But when my seven long years are out,
O then I'll marry Sally,
And then how happily we'll live—
But not in our alley

Henry Carey.

Ye Bank and Braes

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fausse Luvie was true

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird
That sings beside thy mate,
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luvie;
And sae did I o' mine

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree;
And my fausse luvie staw the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me

Robert Burns.

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan Conuil

Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array,
Gentles and Commons!

Come from deep glen, and
From mountain so rocky,
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlochy
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one!

Leave untended the herd,
The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterred,
The bride at the altar
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges,
Come with your fighting-gear,
Broadswords and targes

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page, and groom,
Tenant and master

Fast they come, fast they come,
See how they gather!
Wide waves the eagle plume,
Blended with heather.

Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set;
Pibroch of Donuill Dhu,
Knell for the onset!

Sir Walter Scott.

A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an appletree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit,
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea,
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me .

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes,
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys,
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me

Christina Georgina Rossetti.

Sweet and Low

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me,
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon.
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep
 Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

“Come into the Garden, Maud”

Come into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone,
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
 And the musk of the roses blown

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die
All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon,
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune,
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, “There is but one
 With whom she has heart to be gay.

When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away

I said to the rose, " The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
" For ever and ever, mine "

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall,
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all,

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree,
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea,
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me,
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear,
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, " She is near, she is near,"
And the white rose weeps, " She is late,"
The larkspur listens, " I hear, I hear,"
And the lily whispers, " I wait "

She is coming, my own, my sweet,
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed,
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead,
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

War Song of the Saracens

We are they who come faster than fate we are they who ride
early or late
We storm at your ivory gate Pale Kings of the Sunset, beware!
Not in silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained solemnity die
Among women who chatter and cry, and children who mumble
a prayer

But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise with a
shout, and we tramp
With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray of the
wind in our hair

From the lands where the elephants are, to the forts of Merou
and Balghar,
Our steel we have brought and our star to shine on the ruins
of Rum
We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and by God we
will go there again,
We have stood on the shore of the plain where the Waters of
Destiny boom
A mart of destruction we made at Jalula where men were
afraid,
For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was a broker of
doom,

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured not a few of
ambition,
And drave not a few to perdition with medicine bitter and
strong
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright as a deso-
late pool,
And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their cavalry
thundered along
For the coward was drowned with the brave when our battle
sheered up like a wave,
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to God in
our song

James Elroy Flecker

THE IDYLL

The name *idyll* is derived from the Greek *eidullion*, which means "a little picture." The Idyll might therefore be described as a poetic sketch. It is not a narrative poem, for though it may contain slight suggestions of a tale, it does not seek to interest us by the progress of events. It is essentially different from the song, for its nature is objective; it directs the reader's attention to the picture it presents, not to the feelings of the poet. Though it sometimes takes the form of dialogue, it is never strictly dramatic, for it has no dramatic movement. It may show us contrasted characters, but it is not designed to show the development or interaction of characters. The typical idyll aims at presenting a scene, a character, or a group of characters, as they are at one moment. It is a little picture of life detached from past and future events, and it makes its appeal by the simple intimacy of its presentation.

The picture presented in an idyll is usually pleasing. It may not be gay, but it is not ugly or commonplace. Ugliness may have its place in poems of greater scope, where it can be shown in relation to other aspects of life. It has no place in the typical idyll, which is limited to the single picture. Thus the term *idyllic* has come to describe scenes that have a pleasant atmosphere, such as the forest scenes in *As You Like It*, where the action interests us less than the picture of the happy woodland life.

Many idylls depict pastoral scenes. This preference is mainly due to their origin. Idylls were first written with distinction in the third century B.C. by the Greek poet Theo-

critus, who depicted the shepherd life of Sicily, a life with which he was intimately acquainted. This tradition was followed by Vergil in his Eclogues, which were, however, more literary in their inspiration, and by English poets of the Renaissance, notably Spenser and Milton. The pastoral life of Sicily was admirably suited to idyllic poetry, since simple characters and manners lend themselves to simple presentation. But pastoral themes are by no means necessary to the idyll. Mr Blunden's *Almswomen* is a better example of idyllic simplicity than the artificial eclogues of Vergil or Spenser. It is essentially more akin to the idylls of Theocritus, since it presents a picture which has been intimately observed and gives an impression of simple reality.

It is sometimes difficult to decide whether a particular poem may properly be described as an idyll. Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*, for example, might possibly be called an idyll, since it presents a picture, but perhaps it would be better described as a song, since it makes its appeal rather by the direct expression of the poet's emotion than by the presentation of a picture. Tennyson's *Lotus-Eaters* has some resemblance to an idyll, but it would be better to call it a dramatic lyric, since it is the mood of the speaker which constitutes its main interest. Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are designed to express two contrasted moods, but in these poems it is the idyllic element, the series of little pictures they contain, which holds the reader's attention.

Tennyson's use of the word *idyll* is rather difficult to explain. The *Idylls of the King* are so long and have such a strong narrative interest that it seems misleading to describe them as "little pictures." We may suppose, however, that Tennyson wished to suggest that his *Idylls* were to be regarded neither as parts of a complete epic, nor as complete stories, appealing each by its separate plot, but rather as a loosely connected series of sketches depicting various aspects of Arthurian chivalry.

It does not, perhaps, matter very much whether we label

certain poems as *idylls* or not. It is more important to understand the nature of a typical idyll and to see how other poems approximate to the type. The term *idyll* can then be used to distinguish those poems which appeal to us as essentially "little pictures"

Country Life

Who can live in heart so glad
As the merry country lad,
Who upon a fair green baulk
May at pleasure sit and walk,
And amid the azure skies
• See the morning sun arise?
While he hears in every spring
How the birds do chirp and sing;
Or before the hounds in cry
See the hare go stealing by;
Or, along the shallow brook,
Angling with a baited hook,
See the fishes leap and play
In a blessed sunny day,
Or to hear the partridge call
Till she have her covey all,
Or to see the subtle fox,
How the villain plies the box,
After feeding on his prey
How he closely sneaks away,
Through the hedge and down the furrow
Till he gets into his burrow,
Then the bee to gather honey,
And the little black-haired coney
On a bank for sunny place
With her forefeet wash her face:

Are not these, with thousands moe
Than the courts of kings do know,
The true pleasing spirit's sights,
That may breed true love's delights?
But with all this happiness
To behold that shepherdess
To whose eyes all shepherds yield
All the fairest of the field,
Fair Aglaia, in whose face
Lives the shepherd's highest grace;
For whose sake I say and swear,
By the passions that I bear,
Had I got a kingly grace,
I would leave my kingly place
And in heart be truly glad
To become a country lad!

Nicholas Breton.

L'Allegro

Hence, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings
And the night-raven sings,
There, under ebon shades and low-brow'd rocks
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell

But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth

With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crownéd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying—
There on beds of violets blue
And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew
Fill'd her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathéd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek,
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides
Come, and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty,
And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee
In unprovéd pleasures free,
To hear the lark begin his flight
And singing startle the dull night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow
Through the sweetbriar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine
While the cock with lively din
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,

And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe, •
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the landscape round it measures,
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest,
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide,
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some Beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes

Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs, and other country messes
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses,

And then in haste her bower she leaves
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.

Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holy-day,
Till the live-long daylight fail.
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat,
She was pinch'd, and pull'd, she said,
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end,
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep
Tower'd cities please us then
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize

Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask, and antique pageantry,
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild

And ever against eating cares
Lap me in soft Lydian airs
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony,
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber, on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydice

These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live

John Milton

II Penseroso

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bestead
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.

But hail, thou goddess sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore,
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove
Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain
Flowing with majestic train,

And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Ay round about Jove's altar sing
And add to these retired Leisure
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure —
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation,
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accusom'd oak
—Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song,
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering Moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud
Oft, on a plat of rising ground
I hear the far-off curfeu sound
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removéd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm
Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground;
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet, or with element
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In scepter'd pall come sweeping by,
Presenting 'Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage
But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musaeus from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,

Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek
And made Hell grant what Love did seek!¹
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacé to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride.
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear

Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear, &
Not trick'd and frownc'd as she was wont
With the Attic Boy to hunt,
But kercheft in a comely cloud
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves
With minute drops from off the eaves
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaming beams, me, goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heav'd stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by some brook
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honey'd thigh,

That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep,
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high-embow'd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight
Casting a dim religious light
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.

And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth show,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain

These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live

John Milton.

The Question to Lisetta

What nymph should I admire or trust,
But Chloe beauteous, Chloe just?
What nymph should I desire to see,
But her who leaves the plain for me?
To whom should I compose the lay,
But her who listens when I play?
To whom in song repeat my cares,
But her who in my sorrow shares?
For whom should I the garland make,
But her who joys the gift to take,
And boasts she wears it for my sake?
In love am I not fully blest?
Lisetta, prithee tell the rest

Lisetta's Reply

Sure Chloe just and Chloe fair,
Deserves to be your only care,
But, when you and she to-day
Far into the wood did stray,
And I happened to pass by,
Which way did you cast your eye?
But, when your cares to her you sing,
You dare not tell her whence they spring,
Does it not more afflict your heart,
That in those cares she bears a part?
When you the flowers for Chloe twine,
Why do you to her garland join
The meanest bud that falls from mine?
Simplest of swains! the world may see
Whom Chloe loves, and who loves me

Matthew Prior.

The Home Prepared

My banks they are furnish'd with bees,
Whose murmur invites one to sleep,
My grottos are shaded with trees,
And my hills are white over with sheep.
I seldom have met with a loss,
Such health do my fountains bestow,
My fountains all border'd with moss,
Where the hare-bells and violets grow

Not a pine in my grove is there seen,
But with tendrils of woodbine is bound,
Not a beech's more beautiful green
But a sweet-brier entwines it around
Not my fields, in the prime of the year,
More charms than my cattle unfold,
Not a brook that is limpid and clear,
But it glitters with fishes of gold

One would think she might like to retire
To the bower I have labour'd to rear,
Not a shrub that I heard her admire,
But I hasted and planted it there
O, how sudden the jessamine strove
With the lilac to render it gay!
Already it calls for my love,
To prune the wild branches away

From the plains, from the woodlands and groves
What strains of wild melody flow!
How the nightingales warble their loves
From thickets of roses that blow!

And when her bright form shall appear,
Each bird shall harmoniously join
In a concert so soft and so clear,
As—she may not be fond to resign

William Shenstone.

Meg Merrilies

Old Meg she was a Gipsy,
And lived upon the Moors
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors
Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom,
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees—
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please
No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the moon

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen yew
She wove, and she would sing
And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited mats o' rushes,
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon:
An old red blanket cloak she wore,
A chip hat had she on
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago!

John Keats.

The Nymph's Song to Hylas

I know a little garden-close
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy dawn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillar'd house is there,
And though the apple boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God,
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before!

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the place two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea,
The hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee,
The shore no ship has ever seen,
Still beaten by the billows green,
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.

For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
That maketh me both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskill'd to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek

Yet tottering as I am, and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place,
To seek the unforgotten face
Once seen, once kiss'd, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea

William Morris.

Alciphron and Leucippe

An ancient chestnut's blossoms threw
Their heavy odour over two.
Leucippe, it is said, was one;
The other, then, was Alciphron
"Come, come! why should we stand beneath
This hollow tree's unwholesome breath?"
Said Alciphron, "here's not a blade
Of grass or moss, and scanty shade
Come, it is just the hour to rove
In the lone dingle shepherds love,
There, straight and tall, the hazel twig
Divides the crooked, rock-held fig,
O'er the blue pebbles where the rill
In winter runs and may run still
Come then, while fresh and calm the air,
And while the shepherds are not there."

Leucippe

But I would rather go when they
Sit round about and sing and play.
Then why so hurry me? for you
Like play and song and shepherds too.

Alciphron

I like the shepherds very well,
And song and play, as you can tell
But there is play, I sadly fear,
And song I would not have you hear

Leucippe

What can it be? What can it be?

Alciphron

To you may none of them repeat
The play that you have played with me,
The song that made your bosom beat

Leucippe

Don't keep your arm about my waist

Alciphron

Might you not stumble?

Leucippe

Well then, do.

But why are we in all this haste?

Alciphron

To sing

Leucippe

Alas! and not play too?

Walter Savage Landor.

Thus the Mayne Glideth

Thus the Mayne glideth
Where my Love abideth;
Sleep's no softer it proceeds
On through lawns, on through meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasturage
Bears not on its shaven ledge
Aught but weeds and waving grasses
To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primroses too faint to catch
A weary bee And scarce it pushes
Its gentle way through strangling rushes
Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when noon-heats are near,
Glad the shelving banks to shun,
Red and steaming in the sun,
Where the shrew-mouse with pale throat
Burrows, and the speckled stoat,
Where the quick sandpipers flit
In and out the marl and grit
That seems to breed them, brown as they
Naught disturbs its quiet way,
Save some lazy stork that springs
Trailing it with legs and wings,
Whom the shy fox from the hill
Rouses, creep he ne'er so still

Robert Browning.

The Beggar Maid

Her arms across her breast she laid,
She was more fair than words can say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way,
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day"

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been
Cophetua sware a royal oath
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Ruth

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripen'd,—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell;
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks —

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home

Thomas Hood

Almswomen

At Quincey's moat the squandering village ends,
And there in the almshouse dwell the dearest friends
Of all the village, two old dames that cling
As close as any truckloves in the spring
Long, long ago they passed threescore-and-ten,
And in this doll's house lived together then,
All things they have in common, being so poor,
And their one fear, Death's shadow at the door
Each sundown makes them mournful, each sunrise
Brings back the brightness in their failing eyes
How happy go the rich fair-weather days
When on the roadside folk stare in amaze
At such a honeycomb of fruit and flowers
As mellow round their threshold, what long hours
They gloat upon their steeping hollyhocks,
Bee's balsams, feathery southernwood, and stocks,

Fiery dragon's-mouth, great mallow leaves
 For salves, and lemon-plants in bushy sheaves,
 Shagged Esau's-hands with five green finger-tips.
 Such old sweet names are ever on their lips
 As pleased as little children where these grow
 In cobbled pattens and worn gowns they go,
 Proud of their wisdom when on gooseberry shoots
 They stuck eggshells to fright from coming fruits
 The brisk-billed rascals, pausing still to see
 Their neighbour owls saunter from tree to tree,
 Or in the hushing half-light mouse the lane
 Long-winged and lordly.

But when these hours wane,
 Indoors they ponder, scared by the harsh storm
 Whose pelting saracens on the window swarm,
 And listen for the mail to clatter past
 And church clock's deep bay withering on the blast;
 They feed the fire that flings a freakish light
 On pictured kings and queens grotesquely bright,
 Platters and pitchers, faded calendars
 And graceful hour-glass trim with lavenders

Many a time they kiss and cry, and pray
 That both be summoned in the selfsame day,
 And wiseman linnet tinkling in his cage
 End too with them the friendship of old age,
 And all together leave their treasured room
 Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom

Edmund Blunden

Recommended for further reading:

Spenser *The Shepherd's Calendar*
 J. Dyer *Grongar Hill*
 Goldsmith: *The Deserted Village*.

- Burns: *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*
 Browning: *Up at a Villa; Down in the City.*
 Wordsworth *Michael*
 Tennyson *Dora*
 R Brooke *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester.*
 A. C Benson *My Will.*
 E Thomas *Adlestrop*

THE BALLAD

The ballad proper is a crude type of popular poetry which flourished chiefly in the fifteenth century. It is always anonymous, and some scholars hold that it was a sort of communal production. It was at least the common possession of people who had no access to literature, and it was long preserved by oral tradition.

Ballads, as we know them, are narrative poems showing some traces of association with song and dance. The stories they tell are often fierce and tragic, and even the humour is apt to be violent. They deal chiefly with simple themes, such as love, jealousy, revenge, border feuds, shipwreck, and supernatural marvels. Often they celebrate historical events, and many of them were probably occasioned by some real occurrence.

The manner of the ballads is curiously abrupt and at the same time allusive. They celebrate rather than relate their stories, thus they omit all but the exciting moments. Most of them are tragic anecdotes, leading up to a single climax.

The metre and language have recognizable peculiarities. Most ballads are written in "ballad metre", a rough stanza of four approximately iambic lines, the first and third lines containing four feet, and the second and fourth three feet. As only the second and fourth lines rhyme, and as ballads were not designed to be written down, the stanza might equally well be regarded as a couplet.

Various forms of repetition are common in ballads, the most notable being the refrain, a line in each stanza which

probably lent itself to some kind of choral repetition, like the lines used in children's games.

The chief idiosyncrasy of the language is the use of stock phrases and adjectives. The ballads commonly speak of *red gold*, *yellow hair*, and *merry men*, and repeat certain quaint turns of phrase, such as

" She hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,"

which are easy to recognize and to imitate. This common stock of phrases emphasizes the communal nature of the ballads and helps to disguise any individuality in the authorship.

A study of modern ballad-imitations serves to shew more clearly the peculiar and indefinable quality of the old ballads. Poets such as Keats and Scott have imitated the subjects and manner of the old ballads and have achieved fine poetry in their imitations, but have never quite succeeded in reproducing the note of the genuine ballad.

The strange, wild, heroic note of the ballads has had a special fascination for Romantic poets, a fascination which is thus recorded by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defense of Poesie*:

" I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet "

OLD BALLADS

Chevy Chace

God prosper long our noble king,
Our liffes and safetyes all,
A woefull hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace befall

To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Erle Percy took his way,
The child may rue that is unborne
The hunting of that day

The stout Erle of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summers days to take,

The cheefest harts in Chevy-Chace
To kill and beare away
These tydings to Erle Douglas came,
To Scotland where he lay

Who sent Erle Percy present word,
He wold prevent his sport,
The English Erle not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort,

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
To ayme their shafts arright

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran,
To chase the fallow deere,
On Munday they began to hunt,
Ere day-light did appeare,

And long before high noone they had
An hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having din'd, the drovyers went
To rouze the deere againe

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure,
Theire backsides all, with speciall care,
That day were guarded sure

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
An echo shrill did make

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the tender deere,
Quoth he, " Erle Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere,

" But if I thought he wold not come,
Noe longer wold I stay "
With that a brave younge gentleman
Thus to the Erle did say

" Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
His men in armour bright,
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres,
All marching in our sight,

" All men of pleasant Trivdale,
Fast by the river Twede " —

" O cease your sport," Erle Percy said,
" And take your bowes with speede

" And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance,
For never was there champion yett
In Scotland or in France,

" That ever did on horsebacke come,
But, if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man
With him to breake a spere "

Erle Douglas on his milk-white steede,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold

" Show me," sayd hee, " whose men you bee,
That hunt soe boldly heere,
That, without my consent, doe chase
And kill my fallow-deere "

The man that first did answer make
Was noble Percy hee,
Who sayd, " Wee list not to declare,
Nor shew whose men wee bee

" Yet will wee spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay ",
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
And thus in rage did say,

" Ere thus I will out-braved bee,
One of us two shall dye
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I

" But trust me, Percy, pittye it were,
And great offence, to kill
Any of these our guiltlesse men,
For they have done no ill

“ Let thou and I the battell trye,
And set our men aside ”—
“ Accurst bee he,” Erle Percy sayd,
“ By whome this is denyed ”

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, “ I wold not have it told
To Henry our king for shame,

“ That ere my captaine fought on foote,
And I stood looking on
You bee two erles,” sayd Witherington,
“ And I a squier alone

“ Ile doe the best that doe I may,
While I have power to stand,
While I have power to weeld my sword,
Ile fight with hart and hand ”

Our English archers bent their bowes,
Their harts were good and trew,
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew

Yet bides Earl Douglas on the bent,
As Chieftain stout and good,
As valiant Captain, all unmov'd
The shock he firmly stood

His host he parted had in three,
As Leader ware and try'd,
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bare down on every side

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound,
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground.

And throwing strait their bows away,
They grasp'd their swords so bright:
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.

They clos'd full fast on everye side,
Noe slacknes there was found,
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground

O Christ! it was a grieve to see,
And likewise for to heare,
The cries of men lying in their gore,
And scattered here and there.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might,
Like lyons wood they layd on lode,
And made a cruell fight

They fought, untill they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steele,
Untill the blood, like drops of rain,
They trickling downe did feele

"Yeeld thee, Lord Percy," Douglas sayd,
"In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanc'd bee
By James our Scottish king

THE BALLAD

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"Thy ransome I will freely give,
And thus report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight
That ever I did see"—

"Noe, Douglas," quoth Erle Percy then,
"Thy proffer I doe scorn,
I will not yelde to any Scott,
That ever yett was borne"

With that, there came an arrow keene
Out of an English bow,
Which strucke Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadlye blow

Who never spake more words than these,
"Fight on, my merry men all,
For why, my life is at an end
Lord Percy sees my fall"

Then leaving life, Erle Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand,
And said, "Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land!"

"O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake,
For sure, a more renowned knight
Mischance cold never take"

A knight amongst the Scotts there was
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy,

Sir Hugh Mountgomerye was he call'd,
Who, with a spere most bright,
Well-mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight;

And past the English archers all,
Without all dread or feare,
And through Earl Percyes body then
He thrust his hatefull spere—

With such a vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The speare ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard, and more

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine;
An English archer then perceiv'd
The noble erle was slaine

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew hee.

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
So right the shaft he sett,
The grey goose-wing that was thercon
In his harts bloode was wett

This fight did last from breake of day
Till setting of the sun,
For when they rung the evening bell,
The battel scarce was done

With stout Erle Percy, there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratchiff, and Sir John,
Sir James, that bold Barón.

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Rabby there was slaine,
Whose prowess did surmount

For Witherington needs must I wayle,
As one in doleful dumpes,
For when his legs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumpes

And with Erle Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerie,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld
One foote wold never flee

Sir Charles Murray of Ratchiff, too,
His sisters sonne was hee,
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
Yet savéd cold not bee

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erle Douglas dye,
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres,
Scarce fifty-five did flye

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest were slaine in Chevy-Chace,
Under the greene-wood tree

Next day did many widows come,
Their husbands to bewayle;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle

Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple blood,
They bore with them away.
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay

This newes was brought to Eddenborrow,
Where Scotlands king did raigne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine

"O héavy newes," King James did say;
"Scotland can witnesse bee,
I have not any captaine more
Of such account as hee "

Like tydings to King Henry came,
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slaine in Chevy-Chace

"Now God be with him," said our king,
"Sith it will noe better bee,
I trust I have, within my realme,
Five hundred as good as hee

"Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say
But I will vengeance take,
I'll be revengéd on them all
For brave Erle Perceys sake."

This vow full well the king perform'd
After, at Humbledowne;
In one day, fifty knights were slayne,
With lordes of great renowne

And of the rest, of small account,
Did many thousands dye
Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy-Chace,
Made by the Erle Percy.

God save our king, and bless this land
In plentye, joy, and peace;
And grant henceforth, that foule debate
"Twixt noble men may cease!

Sir Patrick Spens

The king sits in Dumfermline town
Drinking the blude-red wine,
"O whare will I get a skeedly skipper
To sail this new ship o' mine?"

O up and spak an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee;
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea "

Our king has written a braid letter,
And sealed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

“ To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem,
The king's daughter o' Noroway,
’Tis thou must bring her hame ”

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
So loud, loud laugh'd he,
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
A tear blinded his e'e

“ O wha is this has done this deed,
And tauld the king o' me,
To send us out at this time o' year,
To sail upon the sea?

“ Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem;
The king's daughter o' Noroway,
’Tis we must fetch her hame ”

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn
Wi' a' the speed they may;
They hae landed in Noroway
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week
In Noroway but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say.

“ Ye Scottisshmen spend a' our king's gowd
And a' our queen's fee ”—
“ Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
Fu' loud I hear ye hiel

" For I hae brought as much white monie
As gane my men and me,
And I hae brought a half-fou o' gude red gowd
Out owre the sea wi' me.

" Mak ready, mak ready, my merry men a'!
Our gude ship sails the morn "—
" Now ever alack, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm

" I saw the new moon late yestreen
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And if we gang to sea, inaster,
I fear we'll come to harm "

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, the top-mast lap,
It was sic a deadly storm!
And the waves cam owre the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn

" O whare will I get a gude sailor
To tak' my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall top-mast,
To see if I can spy land?"—

" O here am I, a sailor gude,
To tak' the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall top-mast,
But I fear you'll ne'er spy land "

He hadna gone a step, a step,
A step but barely ane,
When a bolt flew out of our goodly ship,
And the saut sea it came in.

“ Go fetch a web o’ the silken claith,
Another o’ the twine,
And wap them into our ship’s side,
And let nae the sea come in ”

They fetched a web o’ the silken claith,
Another o’ the twine,
And they wapped them round that gude ship’s side,
But still the sea came in

O laith, laith were our gude Scots lords
To wet their cork-heel’d shoon;
But lang or a’ the play was played
They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed
That flatter’d on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord’s son
That never mair cam hame

O lang, lang may the ladies sit
Wi’ their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang may the maidens sit
Wi’ their gowd kames in their hair,
A-waiting for their ain dear loves—
For them they’ll see nae mair!

THE BALLAD

Half-owre, half-owre to Aberdour,
 'Tis fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens
 Wi' the Scots lords at his feet

Binnorie

There were twa sisters sat in a bour,
 Binnorie, O Binnorie!
There cam' a knight to be their wooer,
 By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie

He courted the eldest with glove and ring,
But he lo'ed the youngest abune a' thing.

The eldest she was vexéd sair,
And sair envied her sister fair

Upon a morning fair and clear,
She cried upon her sister dear

“ O sister, sister, tak' my hand,
And we'll see our father's ships to land.”

She's ta'en her by the hly hand,
And led her down to the river-strand

The youngest stood upon a stane,
The eldest cam' and pushed her in

“ O sister, sister, reach your hand!
And ye sall be heir o' half my land

“ O sister, reach me but your glove!
And sweet William sall be your love.”—

"Foul fa' the hand that I should take;
It twin'd me o' my warldis make.

"Your cherry cheeks and your yellow hair
Gar'd me gang maiden evermair."

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam
Until she cam' to the miller's dam

Out then cam' the miller's son,
And saw the fair maid soummen' in.

"O father, father, draw your dam!
There's either a mermaid or a milk-white swan."

The miller hasted and drew his dam,
And there he found a drowned woman.

You couldna see her middle sma',
Her gowden girdle was sae braw

You couldna see her lily feet,
Her gowden fringes were sae deep.

You couldna see her yellow hair
For the strings o' pearls was twisted there.

You couldna see her fingers sma',
Wi' diamond rings they were cover'd a'.

And by there cam' a harper fine,
That harpit to the king at dine

And when he look'd that lady on,
He sigh'd and made a heavy moan.

He's made a harp of her breast-bane,
Whose sound would melt a heart of stane.

He's ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,
And wi' them strung his harp sae rare.

He went into her father's hall,
And there was the court assembled all.

He laid his harp upon a stane,
And straight it began to sing by lane

" O yonder sits my father, the King,
And yonder sits my mother, the Queen,

" And yonder stands my brother Hugh,
And by him my William, sweet and true "

But the last tune that the harp play'd then—

Binnorie, O Binnorie!—

Was, " Woe to my sister, false Helén!"

By the bonnie mull-dams o' Binnorie

The Wife of Usher's Well

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she
She had three stout and stalwart sons
And sent them o'er the sea

They had not been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane

They had not been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fishes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me
In earthly flesh and blood!"

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were of the birk.

It nerther grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh,
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For all my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well!"

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide,
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bedside

Then up and crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the grey.
The eldest to the youngest said,
" 'Tis time we were away!"

'The cock he hadna craw'd but ance,
And clapp'd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
" Brother, we must awa'."

" The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide,
Gin we be miss'd out o' our place,
A sair pain we must bide "

" Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may,
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes,
She'll go mad e'er it be day"—

" Fare ye well, my mother dear! •
Farewell to barn and byre!
And fare ye well, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

Edward, Edward

" Why does your brand sae drop wi' blude,
Edward, Edward?
Why does your brand sae drop wi' blude,
And why sae sad gang ye, O?"—
" O I hae killed my hawk sae gude,
Mither, mither,
O I hae kill'd my hawk sae gude,
And I had nae mair but he, O "

" Your hawk's blude was never sae red,
Edward, Edward;

Your hawk's blude was never sae red,
My dear son, I tell thee, O"—

" O I hae kill'd my red-roan steed,
Mither, mither,

O I hae kill'd my red-roan steed,
That erst was sae fair and free, O "

" Your steed was auld, and ye hae got mair,
Edward, Edward,

Your steed was auld, and ye hae got mair,
Some other dule ye dree, O"—

" O I hae kill'd my father dear,
Mither, mither,

O I hae kill'd my father dear,
Alas, and wae is me, O!"

" And whatten penance will ye dree for that,
Edward, Edward?

Whatten penance will ye dree for that?
My dear son, now tell me, O."—

" I'll set my feet in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,

I'll set my feet in yonder boat,
And I'll fare over the sea, O."

" And what will ye do wi' your towers and your ha',
Edward, Edward?

And what will ye do wi' your towers and your ha',
That were sae fair to see, O?"—

" I'll let them stand till they doun fa',
Mither, mither;

I'll let them stand till they doun fa',
For here never mair maun I be, O."

“ And what will ye leave to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?”

And what will ye leave to your bairns and your wife,
When ye gang owre the sea, O?”—

“ The world’s room let them beg through life,
Mither, mither;

The world’s room let them beg through life;
For them never mair will I see, O ”

“ And what will ye leave to your ain mither dear,
Edward, Edward?”

And what will ye leave to your ain mither dear,
My dear son, now tell me, O ”—

“ The curse of hell frae me sall ye bear,
Mither, mither,

The curse of hell frae me sall ye bear, ,
Sic counsels ye gave to me, O!”

Anon

Fair Helen

I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies
On fair Kirconnell lea!

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

O think na but my heart was sair
When my Love dropt down and spak nae mair!
I laid her down wi’ meikle care
On fair Kirconnell lea.

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

As I went down the water-side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell lea,

I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hackéd him in pieces sma',
I hackéd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair
Shall bind my heart for evermair
Until the day I die

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries,
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste and come to me!"

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee, I were blest,
Where thou lies low and takes thy rest
On fair Kirconnell lea

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell lea

I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies,
Since my Love died for me

Anon.

MODERN BALLAD-POEMS

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
 And he stoppeth one of three
 "By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
 Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

An ancient
 Mariner meeteth
 three gallants
 bidden to a
 wedding-feast
 and detaineth
 one

The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide,
 And I am next of kin,
 The guests are met, the feast is set
 May'st hear the merry din "

He holds him with his skinny hand,
 "There was a ship," quoth he
 "Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he

He holds him with his glittering eye—
 The Wedding-Guest stood still,
 And listens like a three years' child:
 The Mariner hath his will

The Wedding-
 Guest is spell-
 bound by the eye
 of the old seafar-
 ing man, and con-
 strained to hear
 his tale

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone
 He cannot choose but hear,
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner

"The ship was cheer'd, the harbour clear'd,
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the kirk, below the hill,
 Below the lighthouse top,

The Mariner tells
how the ship
sailed southward
with a good wind
and fair weather,
till it reached the
Line

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——”
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-
Guest heareth the
bridal music, but
the Mariner con-
tinueth his tale

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she,
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner

The ship drawn
by a storm toward
the South Pole

“ And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roar’d the blast,
And southward ay we fled

And now there came both mist and snow
And it grew wondrous cold
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between

The land of ice,
and of fearful
sounds, where no
living thing was
to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around
It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd,
Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hail'd it in God's name

Till a great sea-
bird, called the
Albatross, came
through the snow-
fog, and was re-
ceived with great
joy and hospi-
tality.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steer'd us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind,
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And lo! the
Albatross proveth
a bird of good
omen, and fol-
loweth the ship as
it returned north-
ward through fog
and floating ice

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perch'd for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmer'd the white moonshine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my crossbow
I shot the Albatross.

The ancient
Mariner inhos-
pitably killeth the
pious bird of good
omen

PART II

" The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollol

His shipmates
cry out against
the ancient
Mariner for
killing the bird
of good luck

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe
For all averr'd I had kill'd the bird
'That made the breeze to blow
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the
fog cleared off,
they justify the
same, and thus
make themselves
accomplices in
the crime

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist
'Then all averr'd I had kill'd the bird
That brought the fog and mist
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist

The fair breeze
continues, the
ship enters the
Pacific Ocean,
and sails north-
ward, even till it
reaches the Line

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free,
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea

The ship hath
been suddenly
becalmed

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be,
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink

And the Albatross begins to
be avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so,
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us
From the land of mist and snow

A Spirit had followed them;
one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor

angels, concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus and the Platonic Constantino-
politan, Michael Psellus may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is
no climate or element without one or more

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates
in their sore
distress, would
fain throw the
whole guilt on
the ancient
Mariner in sign
whereof they
hang the dead
sea-bird round
his neck

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

The ancient
Mariner be-
holdeth a sign in
the element
afar off

" There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parch'd, and glazed each eye
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seem'd a little speck,
And then it seem'd a mist,
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it near'd and near'd
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plung'd, and tack'd, and veer'd

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him to
be a ship, and at
a dear ransom he
freeth his speech
from the bonds of
thrust.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail,
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I suck'd the blood,
And cried, " A sail! a sail!"

A flash of joy

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
 Hither to work us weal—
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel!

And horror fol-
 lows For can it
 be a ship that
 comes onward
 without wind or
 tide?

The western wave was all aflame,
 The day was wellnigh done!
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad, bright Sun,
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was fleck'd with bars
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peer'd
 With broad and burning face

It seemeth him
 but the skeleton
 of a ship

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears!
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
 Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate?
 And is that Woman all her crew?
 Is that a Death? and are there two?
 Is Death that Woman's mate?

And its ribs are
 seen as bars on
 the face of the set-
 ting Sun. The
 Spectre-Woman
 and her Death-
 mate, and no
 other, on board
 the skeleton ship
 Like vessel, like
 crew!

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
 Her locks were yellow as gold.
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
 The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death and Life-
in-Death have
diced for the
ship's crew, and
she (the latter)
winneth the an-
cient Mariner

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice,
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight
within the courts
of the Sun.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark,
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark

At the rising of
the Moon

We listen'd and look'd sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seem'd to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleam'd white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip

One after
another,

One after one, by the star-dogg'd Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye

His shipn ates
drop down dead

Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropp'd down one by one.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on
the ancient
Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it pass'd me by
Like the whizz of my crossbow!"

PART IV

" I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribb'd sea-sand

The Wedding-
Guest feareth
that a spirit is
talking to him

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown"—
" Fear not, fear not, thou wedding guest!
This body dropt not down

But the ancient
Mariner assureth
him of his bodily
life and pro-
ceedeth to re-
late his horrible
penance

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on, and so did I

He despiseth the
creatures of the
calm

I look'd upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away,
I look'd upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay

And envieth that
they should live,
and so many lie
dead

I look'd to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
 And the balls like pulses beat,
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,
 And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse
 liveth for him in
 the eye of the
 dead men

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
 Nor rot nor reek did they
 The look with which they look'd on me
 Had never pass'd away

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
 A spirit from on high,
 But oh! more horrible than that
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
 And yet I could not die

In his loneliness
 and fixedness he
 yearneth towards
 the journeying
 Moon, and the
 stars that still
 sojourn, yet still
 move onward,

and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival

The moving Moon went up the sky,
 And nowhere did abide,
 Softly she was going up,
 And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoock'd the sultry main,
 Like April hoar-frost spread,
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
 The charmed water burnt alway
 A still and awful red

By the light of
 the Moon he
 beholdeth God's
 creatures of the
 great calm

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 I watch'd the water snakes.
 They moved in tracks of shining white,
 And when they rear'd, the elfish light
 Fell off in hoary flakes

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watch'd their rich attire.
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coil'd and swam, and every track
 Was a flash of golden fire

O happy living things! no tongue
 Their beauty might declare
 A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
 And I bless'd them unaware
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
 And I bless'd them unaware

Their beauty and
 their happiness

He blesseth them
 in his heart

The selfsame moment I could pray;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank
 Like lead into the sea

The spell begins
 to break

PART V

"O sleep! it is a gentle thing,
 Beloved from pole to pole!
 To Mary Queen the praise be given!
 She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
 That slid into my soul

The silly buckets on the deck,
 That had so long remain'd,
 I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew,
 And when I awoke, it rain'd

By grace of the
 holy Mother, the
 ancient Mariner
 is refreshed with
 rain

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
 My garments all were dank,
 Sure I had drunken in my dreams.
 And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
 I was so light—almost
 I thought that I had died in sleep,
 And was a blessed ghost

He heareth
 sounds and seeth
 strange sights and
 commotions in
 the sky and the
 element

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
 It did not come anear,
 But with its sound it shook the sails,
 That were so thin and sere

The upper air burst into life;
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen;
 To and fro they were hurried about!
 And to and fro, and in and out,
 The wan stars danced between.

' And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge;
 And the rain pour'd down from one black cloud,
 The Moon was at its edge

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The Moon was at its side,
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 'The lightning fell with never a jag,
 A river steep and wide

The bodies of the
 ship's crew are
 inspired, and the
 ship moves on,

The loud wind never reach'd the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on!
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 The dead men gave a groan

They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes,
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise

The helmsman steer'd, the ship moved on;
 Yet never a breeze up-blew,
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
 We were a ghastly crew

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me, knee to knee
 The body and I pull'd at one rope,
 But he said naught to me "

" I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
 " Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest

But not by the
 souls of the men,
 nor by demons of
 earth or middle
 air, but by a
 blessed troop of
 angelic spirits,
 sent down by the
 invocation of the
 guardian saint

For when it dawn'd --they dropp'd their arms,
 And cluster'd round the mast,
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
 And from their bodies pass'd

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the Sun,
 Slowly the sounds came back again,
 Now mix'd, now one by one

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the skylark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are,
 How they seem'd to fill the sea and air
 With their sweet jargoning!

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute,
 And now it is an angel's song,
 That makes the Heavens be mute

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June,
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune

Till noon we quietly sail'd on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
 Moved onward from beneath

The lonesome
 Spirit from the
 South Pole
 carries on the
 ship as far as the
 Line, in obedi-
 ence to the angelic
 troop, but still
 requireth ven-
 geance

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The Spirit slid and it was he
 That made the ship to go
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also

The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fix'd her to the ocean.
 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion—
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound:
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare;
 But ere my living life return'd,
 I heard, and in my soul discern'd
 Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'is this the man?
 By Him who died on cross,
 With his cruel bow he laid full low
 The harmless Albatross

The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward

The Spirit who bideth by himself
 In the land of mist and snow,
 He loved the bird that loved the man
 Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
 As soft as honey-dew
 Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
 And penance more will do'

PART VI

First Voice.

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
 Thy soft response renewing—
 What makes that ship drive on so fast?
 What is the Ocean doing?"

Second Voice:

'Still as a slave before his lord,
 The Ocean hath no blast;
 His great bright eye most silently
 Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see! how graciously
 She looketh down on him.'

First Voice:

' But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind? '

Second Voice

The Mariner
 hath been cast
 into a trance, for
 the angelic power
 causeth the vessel
 to drive north-
 ward faster than
 human life could
 endure

' The air is cut away before,
 And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
 Or we shall be belated
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The super-
 natural motion
 is retarded, the
 Mariner awakes,
 and his penance
 begins anew

I woke, and we were sailing on
 As in a gentle weather
 'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter
 All fix'd on me their stony eyes,
 That in the Moon did glitter

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never pass'd away'
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And look'd far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

The curse is
finally expiated

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on,
And turns no more his head,
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fann'd my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sail'd softly too
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew

O dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

And the ancient
Mariner be-
holdeth his native
country

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn!
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,
 And the shadow of the Moon

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
 That stands above the rock:
 The moonlight steep'd in silentness
 The steady weathercock

The angelic
 spirits leave the
 dead bodies

And the bay was white with silent light,
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colours came.

And appear in
 their own forms
 of light.

A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were
 I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—
 O Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
 And, by the holy rood!
 A man all light, a seraph-man,
 On every corse there stood

This seraph-band, each waved his hand.
 It was a heavenly sight!
 They stood as signals to the land,
 Each one a lovely light,

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
 No voice did they impart—
 No voice; but O, the silence sank
 Like music on my heart

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the Pilot's cheer,
 My head was turn'd perforce away,
 And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast
 Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast

I saw a third—I heard his voice
 It is the Hermit good!
 He singeth loud his godly hymns
 That he makes in the wood
 He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood

PART VII

"This hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
 He loves to talk with mariners
 That come from a far countree

The Hermit
 of the Wood

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
 He hath a cushion plump
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump

The skiff-boat near'd I heard them talk,
 'Why, this is strange, I trow!
 Where are those lights so many and fair,
 That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the
ship with wonder.

' Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
' And they answer'd not our cheer!
The planks look warp'd! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along,
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

' Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-fear'd '—' Push on, push on!
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirr'd;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard

The ship sud-
denly sinketh

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread
It reach'd the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient
Mariner is saved
in the Pilot's
boat

Stunn'd by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drown'd
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round,
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound

I moved my lips—the Pilot shriek'd
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And pray'd where he did sit

I took the oars the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see
The Devil knows how to row'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!
The Hermit cross'd his brow
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

The ancient
Mariner earnestly
entreateth the
Hermit to shrieve
him and the pen-
ance of life falls
on him

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale,
And then it left me free

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns.
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

And ever and
anon throughout
his future life an
agony constraineth
him to travel from
land to land,

I pass, like night, from land to land;
 I have strange power of speech,
 That moment that his face I see,
 I know the man that must hear me
 To him my tale I teach

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
 The wedding-guests are there
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are:
 And hark, the little vesper bell,
 Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide, wide sea:
 So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
 Scarce seeméd there to be

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
 And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach by
 his own example,
 love and reverence
 to all things that
 God made and
 loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
 He prayeth well, who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all "

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone and now the Wedding-Guest
Turn'd from the bridegroom's door

He went like one that hath been stunn'd,
And is of sense forlorn
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn

Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

The Lady of Shalott

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot,
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses, and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott "

•

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot,
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
 And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed,
"I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me!" cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot,
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer,
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot
But Lancelot mused a little space,
He said, " She has a lovely face,
God in His mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott "

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

La Belle Dame sans Merci

“ O what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing

“ O what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done

“ I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too ”

“ I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild

“ I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan

“ I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song

“ She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew,
And sure, in language strange, she said,
' I love thee true '

" She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore.
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four

" And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side

" I saw pale Kings and Princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all
They cried—' La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall'

" I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapéd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side

" And that is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing "

John Keats

Proud Maisie

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely

“ Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?”

—“ When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye ”

“ Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?”

“ The grey-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

“ The glow-worm o’er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing
Welcome, proud lady!”

Sir Walter Scott.

•

THE SATIRE

The word *satire* is derived from the Latin expression *lanx satura* (a full dish), which was originally used to describe a sort of poetic hash or medley. It was an irregular type of composition, and traces of this origin are evident in many English satires.

Satire, as it is now understood, is distinguished, not by its form, but by its intention. A satirist aims at exposing either vice or folly. He presents to the reader objects calculated to inspire hatred or contempt. His chief weapon is ridicule, but his primary intention is not to be amusing, it is to find suitable expression for his indignation.

The objects of satire are infinitely various, since a poet's indignation may be excited by a single person, a class of people, a political measure, a mode of writing, even a personal slight. Personal malice has in fact inspired some of the cleverest satires, such as Pope's *Dunciad*, but the satires which are most likely to endure are those which are directed against the objects of general dislike, such as social or political tyranny.

The manner of the satirist is very different from that of the lyrical poet. Since hatred and contempt are unlovely feelings, the satirical poet usually avoids giving them direct expression. He makes frequent use of irony, which may be described as a discrepancy between the plain meaning and the underlying intention of a writer. He relies largely on intellectual dexterity and brilliant versification to fascinate his reader and win admiration where he cannot hope for sympathy.

Byron's *Vision of Judgment* illustrates perhaps better than any other single example both the essential quality and the traditional characteristics of satire. It is inspired by fierce

indignation against tyranny and hypocrisy, sharpened by personal resentment. It takes the form of a parody or burlesque and amuses the reader by its exuberant buffoonery, but its essential purpose is to ridicule the wickedness and folly of George III and his political advisers. The style is witty and ironical, and the plan of the poem allows of many random sallies. By its variety and exuberance *The Vision of Judgment* deserves the title of *lanx satura*.

A more concentrated form of satire is seen in the shorter poems included in this collection. Southey's poem on Blenheim is a simple example of irony directed against a single object, namely military glory. The poem is satirical because its intention is to expose the folly of war. It is ironical because its method of expression is indirect, there is a discrepancy between the implied feeling of the poet and the sentiments directly expressed in the poem. It is not a brilliant piece of satire, but it is effective in its own mild and quiet manner. Mr. Sassoon's *Base Details* is a more effective satire on a similar subject, there is more *vera indignatio* underlying its quiet, colloquial phrasing, and the object of the satire—a certain type of military character—takes a more personal form.

In such poems as these there is no trace of the original irregularity of satirical composition. Economy and concentration are their chief formal characteristics. They are satire by virtue of their intention (the exposure of vice or folly), their inspiration (a feeling of indignation), and their method (irony), which distinguishes them from mere invective.

After Blenheim

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy
Who stood expectant by,
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh
" 'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
" Who fell in the great victory

" I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough
The ploughshare turns them out
For many thousand men," said he,
" Were slain in that great victory "

" Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes,
" Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout,
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then
And new-born baby died
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won,
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory

"Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won
And our good Prince Eugene,"
"Why, 'twas a very wicked thing"
Said little Wilhelmine,
"Nay—nay—my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory

“ And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win ”
“ But what good came of it at last? ”
Quoth little Peterkin —
“ Why, that I cannot tell,” said he,
“ But ’twas a famous victory ”

Robert Southey.

The Beasts

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid
and self-contained,
I stand and look at them long and long
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins;
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the mania of
owning things;
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands
of years ago,
Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole earth

Walt Whitman

Base Details

If I were fierce and bald, and short of breath,
I'd live with scarlet Majors at the Base,
And speed glum heroes up the line to death
You'd see me with my puffy petulant face,

Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel,
Reading the Roll of Honour "Poor young chap,"
I'd say—"I used to know his father well,
Yes, we've lost heavily in this last scrap"
And when the war is done and youth stone dead,
I'll toddle safely home and die—in bed

Siegfried Sassoon.

Recommended for further reading:

Dryden *Absalom and Achitophel*
Butler *Hudibras*
Pope *Rape of the Lock*
Byron *The Vision of Judgment*
Chesterton *Wine, Water, and Song.*

EPIGRAMS AND EPITAPHS

An epigram in prose is the concise expression of a specially striking idea. A truly poetic epigram is not merely a prose epigram with the added emphasis of verse, it is the highly concentrated expression of a single emotion.

An epigram has no fixed form or length, but it is usually limited to a single grammatical proposition expressing an emotion which is single and complete.

An epigram may sometimes be a part of a longer poem. Many of Pope's poems, for example, contain celebrated epigrams. But an epigram hardly deserves its title unless it can be appreciated when detached from its context. A very notable, but exceptional use of the epigram is to be found in Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyám*, which is really a series of epigrams, almost every stanza being the complete expression of a single emotion.

An epitaph is properly an inscription on a tombstone. The poetic epitaph strongly resembles the epigram, being naturally brief in form and concentrated in expression.

“ I strove with none ”

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art,
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks, and I am ready to depart

Walter Savage Landor

“ Proud Word you never spoke ”

Proud word you never spoke, but you will speak
Four not exempt from pride some future day.
Resting on one white hand a warm wet cheek
Over my open volume, you will say
“ This man loved me! ” then rise and trip away

Walter Savage Landor

My Garden

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Fern'd grot—
The veriest school
Of peace, and yet the fool
Contentends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign,
’Tis very sure God walks in mine

Thomas Edward Brown.

“ Sound, Sound the Clarion!”

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
 To all the sensual world proclaim,
 One crowded hour of glorious life
 Is worth an age without a name

Sir Walter Scott

“ God bless the King ”

God bless the King—I mean the faith’s defender!
 God bless (no harm in blessing!) the Pretender!
 But who pretender is, or who is king—
 God bless us all!—that’s quite another thing

John Byrom

Epitaph on Charles II

Here lies our Sovereign Lord the King,
 Whose word no man relies on,
 Who never said a foolish thing,
 Nor ever did a wise one

John Wilmott, Earl of Rochester

Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke

Underneath this sable hearse
 Lies the subject of all verse,
 SIDNEY’S sister, PEMBROKE’S mother,
 Death! ere thou hast slain another,
 Learned and fair, and good as she,
 Time shall throw a dart at thee

William Browne

Epitaph on his own Tombstone

Life is a jest and all things show it.
Once I thought it, now I know it!

John Gay

“She dwelt among the Untrodden Ways”

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be,
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me!

William Wordsworth.

An Epitaph

Here lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country
But beauty vanishes, beauty passes,
However rare—rare it be,
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

Walter de la Mare.

FRENCH FORMS

The Ballade, the Villanelle, the Triolet, and the Rondeau are verse forms invented by courtly mediæval French writers. They are distinguished by peculiarly difficult rhyme schemes and by the use of refrains, in which phrases are repeated with slight changes of stress or meaning.

The Ballade (not to be confused with the popular ballad) is a poem of three stanzas followed by an *envoy*. The usual rhyme scheme for the three stanzas is *ababbcbc*, and for the envoy, *bcbc*. The last line of the first stanza is repeated as a refrain at the end of the other stanzas and of the envoy.

The Rondeau contains thirteen lines rhymed in three groups *aabba, aab, aabba*. The refrain consists of the first half of the first line, which is repeated after the second group of lines and again at the end.

The Triolet consists of eight lines rhymed *abaaabab*. The first line is repeated in the fourth line and the first two lines are also repeated in the last two.

The Villanelle is a poem of six stanzas, five tercets (rhymed *aba*), and a final quatrain (*abaa*). There are two refrains, the first line is repeated as the last line of the second and fourth tercets, and the third line is similarly repeated in the third and fifth tercets. The first and the third lines are repeated finally as the last two lines of the quatrain.

It is sometimes suggested that the intricacy of these forms renders them suitable only for graceful exercises in light verse. But the effect of repetition in rhyme and refrain, when skilfully used, is to intensify the emotional quality of the

poet's utterance The repetition of such phrases as *In Flanders Fields*, or *Dost thou remember Sicily?*² does not suggest that the poet is straining to follow an exacting pattern of verse, but rather that he is using that pattern to give to his phrase a greater emotional emphasis with each repetition. Thus the intricacy of the pattern can be made to subserve a genuine artistic purpose

BALLADES

Balade: Lak of Stedfastnesse

Som tyme this world was so stedfast and stable,
That mannes word was obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and decevable,
That word and deed, as in conclusioun,
Ben no-thing lyk, for turned up so down
Is al this world for mede and wilfulnesse.
That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable,
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?³
Among us now a man is holde unable,
But-if he can, by som collusioun,⁴
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wrecchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put down, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun,
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable.
Through covetyse is blent discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to felkenesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

Envoy to King Richard

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
 Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
 Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
 To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
 Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
 Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
 And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse

Geoffrey Chaucer.

A Ballad to Queen Elizabeth

(OF THE SPANISH ARMADA)

King Philip had vaunted his claims,
 He had sworn for a year he would sack us,
 With an army of heathenish names
 He was coming to fagot and stack us,
 Like the thieves of the sea he would track us,
 And shatter our ships on the main,
 But we had bold Neptune to back us,—
 And where are the galleons of Spain?

His carackes were christen'd of dames
 To the kirtles whereof he would tack us,
 With his saints and his gilded stern-frames,
 He had thought like an egg-shell to crack us
 Now Howard may get to his Flaccus,
 And Drake to his Devon again,
 And Hawkins bowl rubbers to Bacchus,—
 For where are the galleons of Spain?

Let his Majesty hang to St. James
 The axe that he whetted to hack us;
 He must play at some lustier games
 Or at sea he can hope to out-thwack us,
 To his mines of Peru he would pack us
 To tug at his bullet and chain,
 Alas that his Greatness should lack us!—
 But where are the galleons of Spain?

Envoy

Gloriana!—the Don may attack us
 Whenever his stomach be fain,
 He must reach us before he can rack us,
 And where are the galleons of Spain?

Austin Dobson

VILLANLLES

Villanelle

A dainty thing's the Villanelle,
 Sly, musical, a jewel in rhyme,
 It serves its purpose passing well

A double-clipped silver bell
 That must be made to clink in chime,
 A dainty thing's the Villanelle,

And if you wish to flute a spell,
 Or ask a meeting 'neath the lime,
 It serves its purpose passing well.

You must not ask of it the swell
 Of organs grandiose and sublime—
 A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

ENGLISH LYRICAL TYPES

And, filled with sweetness, as a shell!
 Is filled with sound, and launched in time,
 It serves its purpose passing well

Still fair to see and good to smell
 As in the quaintness of its prime,
 A dainty thing's the Villanelle,
 It serves its purpose passing well

William Ernest Henley.

Theocritus

A VII LANTILLE

O Singer of Persephone!
 In the dim meadows desolate
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still through the ivy flits the bee
 Where Amaryllis lies in state,
 O Singer of Persephone!

Simætha calls on Hecate
 And hears the wild dogs at the gate,
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still by the light and laughing sea
 Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate,
 O Singer of Persephone!

And still in boyish rivalry
 Young Daphnis challenges his mate;
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

Shm Lacon keeps a goat for thee,
For thee the jocund shepherds wait;
O Singer of Persephone!
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Oscar Wilde

TRIOLETS

“ Urceus Exit ”

I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a sonnet
It began *a la mode*,
I intended an Ode,
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet;
I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a sonnet

Austin Dobson

“ When first we met ”

When first we met we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess
Who could foretell this sore distress,
This irretrievable disaster
When first we met?—We did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master

Robert Bridges

RONDEAUX

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below

We are the Dead Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields

Take 'up our quarrel with the foe
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields

John McCrae

' In After Days

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honoured dust,
I shall not question or reply

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That someone then should testify,
Saying—" He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust "
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

Austin Dobson

Recommended for further reading:

The poems of Andrew Lang and Austin Dobson

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